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1608/3023. A

PRELUDE

TO THE

Grand CLASH

About taking off the

TEST,

BEING A

PARAGRAPH

IN

Mr. FAULKNER's News-Paper,

PROPERLY

TRANSPOSED

AND

PARAPHRASED.

Timeo Danaos, & Dona ferentes.

DUBLIN:

Printed by GEORGE FAULKNER, in *Essex-street*, opposite to the *Bridge*, MDCCLXXXII.

L O N D O N, November 21.

Several Pamphlets, besides that formerly mentioned, have been published relating to the Test Act, one of them tending to shew, that the said Test is no Security to the Church of England against the Dangers of Popery; but that the taking it off may be a certain Security to the Protestant Interest in general, and to the Succession in the present Royal Family.

Many of the Dissenters bestir themselves more and more, in Relation to the grand Affair of having the Test Act taken off, both here and in Ireland, to which End, several Agents are said to come hither from the last named Kingdom. — By their Writings and Discourse, they give us to understand, that their real Friends are very seldom among Ministers of State, but are to be found amongst such Gentlemen as have, unto good Parts and Knowledge, joined a Freedom of Thought, and free Enquiry into Matters of Religion, and from whom they expect their best Endeavours to root up, and extirpate the evil Spirit of Persecution from amongst them; and pray, that they may be thus influenced, and that the supreme Author of Sacraments, will be mercifully pleased to influence the Legislature, to let the World see, that for the Glory of God, the Welfare of Mens Souls, the Case and Security of the Protestant Succession, they have the utmost Reason, and, undoubtedly, as much Power to repeal the Sacramental Test in the Reign of King George, as the Legislature had to make that Law in the Reign of King Charles the II^d in England, or Queen Anne in Ireland.

A Prelude to the Grand Clash, &c.

IN Mr. Faulkner's Paper of the 28th of November, I observ'd a Paragraph, which to me seems to import something more than a plain Piece of News. It contains a short Abstract of the Proceedings and Arguments of the Dissenters, towards abrogating the Test Act; and seems to be seasonably sent abroad, to amuse us with the Justice of their Pretensions, and at the same time to give proper Hints to the Tongues, and Pens of such as are, or can be brought over to their Parry. For which Reason a Paper was drawn up, shewing, that whatever they may lose by eternally teasing the Government, and, upon Refusal, brand-



branding it with the evil Spirit of PERSECUTION, the Moderate, and Thinking among themselves, can expect to get nothing by it: And whatever Comfort their Discourse or Writings may afford one another, they are never likely to have any Effect on the other Side, who on the Foot of *Argument*, can never lose Ground.

THIS Paper shou'd have been publish'd, but upon second Thoughts, since we are so openly threaten'd with a *Siege*, it was thought improvident to be throwing away Ammunition, and Provision, till the Attack comes next Parliament. In the mean time, lest they shou'd be disobliged at our taking no Notice at all of their Intelligence, it may not be improper to let them know, we take it in good Part, and shall contrive to be as ready for them, as their Hearts cou'd wish. I shall not at present give them, or myself, the Trouble of entering far into the Merits of this *very material Affair*, but, as the Fencers do, form an Answer out of the Challenge.

HERE all you Presbyterians, whether Old-light or New-light Men, Independents, Puritans, Anabaptists, Quakers, Muggletonians, Bradlonians, Familists, Brownists, &c. &c. &c.—All you that have for Policy or Shame laid down your *own* and taken up the innocent, soft, silky Name of *Dissenters*! All of you Enemies either to other, by your respective Appellations, but all united against the Church of *England*, in the snug Name of *Dissenters*; you all call your selves equally *Dissenters*, and therefore to be supposed either now, or in your Turn, resolved to claim alike! You are to take Notice, that *several Pamphlets*, besides those wrote by the D——, the Arch-bishop, and others, (any one of which was sufficient to silence Men of *Reason* and *Modesty*) are, (as Occasion shall require) to be published relating to the *Test-Act*; every one of them tending to shew, that the said *Test* is an impregnable Security to the Church of *England*, against the Dangers of *Popery*, and a certain other Faction, that has before now, driven her to the Brink of Ruin, and which by it's Principles wou'd drive her to the same To-morrow. But that the taking it off (tho' it might prove a certain Security to some, who, tho' Protestants, are as much averse to the Church of *England*, as those that are not) cou'd not be a sufficient Security to the Protestant Interest in general, nor the Church

Church of England in particular, nor to the Succession of the present Royal Family, who, by one of the best Laws ever made, are to be not only Protestants, but of the Protestant Religion as by Law establish'd.

It may give that Party some Pleasure, but to us no Manner of Uneasiness, that the Dissenters bestir themselves more and more, in Relation to the grand Affair of having the Test-Act taken off, both in England and Ireland, and that several Agents are from hence sent into England, to that Purpose. As to the real Merits of their Cause, and their Arguments upon it, except they have to a Miracle mended their Hand, we can safely trust them any where; they have long ago done their best, and when they shall have done their worst is hard to tell. But sure I am, they can never carry their Point by fair Argument, and if they carry it by any other Means, it can not be helped. Let them go, but if I be not much mistaken they will return, *Re infectâ*, i. e. with their Finger in their Mouth; for, considering what their Opposers are sure to lose by Compliance, a successful Journey to that End may happen to be so expensive, that all that the Party are worth may not be sufficient to bear their Charges. And what confirms me in this Opinion, is their giving us to understand that their real Friends are seldom among Ministers of State, (which surely is a very bad Sign that their Pretensions are just, or either useful, or safe to the State) but are to be found among such Gentlemen as have, to good Parts and Knowledge, join'd a Freedom of Thought, and a free Enquiry into Matters of Religion: That is, as the World has long since understood those well-known Phrases, their real Friends are to be found among a Company of Free-thinkers, Deists, Latitudinarians, Libertine Toupees, and rotten Courtiers. Men that have piously laid aside the Bible, and set up their own foolish corrupt Heart in its Stead, and call that the Religion of Nature. Men of no Principles, to whom all Religions, all Things are equal, except Loss and Gain in this World, and whose Share of a Bribe may be more, than ever they cou'd expect to make by their Honesty. And so sweet are the Fruits they wou'd reap upon the cancel'd Test, that even by these blessed Instruments they wou'd work for it. And from those they

they expect their best Endeavours (if for the Scourge of the Earth such get into Senates and Councils) to root up, and extirpate the *evil Spirit of PERSECUTION*. And no less it can be in a Government, which, beside offering them all they wish, and all they want, on Conditions *safe to itself*, can't be induced to dispence with one of its most sacred Laws, to qualify them for it. There are but two Things for it, if you grant it, it may possibly be called *Kindness*, if you refuse, its absolutely the evil Spirit of Persecution. I like violent, and invidious Things in others so ill, that I wou'd not be guilty of it my self, but I can't forbear resembling this extraordinary Piece of Conduct, to that of an old grey-bearded Beggar I've often observ'd on *Essex-bridge*, who usually address'd the Passengers for Alms with a Blessing in one Hand, and two Curses in t'other. And tho' in one Case, a Man might part with a *Half penny* to get rid of a troublesome Fellow, in the other he wou'd look three Times round him before he wou'd part with some *hundred Thousands a Year*, and perhaps be buffeted into the Bargain.

So having done with the Preaching, we come next to the Prayer, which is, that *the supreme Author of Sacraments* (and, by the By, the same whose Divine Institution of Bishops they have broke thro', and their regular Succession for 1500 Years, the best Inducement in the World for the Church of *England*, which is govern'd by Bishops, to trust them) *may influence the Legislature, to let the World see, that for the Glory of God, the Welfare of Men's Souls, the Cause and Security of the Protestant Succession, they have the utmost Reason to repeal that Act*. For my Part, I think so too, and upon very good Reasons. Power, Wealth, and Honour (which are at the Bottom of all this Bustle and Noise) have some Charms, and go a great way towards making a Saint a Sinner. And when a Body has taken an incorrigible Appetite to them, is it not against the Glory of God, and the Welfare of Men's Souls, to be driven to the Extremity of coveting, pining, and dying for them; or to have recourse to *occasional Conformity* to get at them. Whereas all this Evil might easily be prevented by charitably *admitting* them, without the odious Tack of a *bated Religion*.

THIS

THIS puts me in mind of a Story of a Woman, who every Autumn, for several Years, fell into a deep Melancholly. The Cause was often, in vain, asked by her Husband and Neighbours, and with some Difficulty at last drawn from her by the Parson of the Parish. The Secret was, she happen'd to be a liquorish Gentlewoman, that took a Fancy to more and better Fruit than grew in her own Garden, and living close by her Landlord's Garden, where there was fine Fruit, she often cast a wishful Eye that way. In her Confession she bewailed a great Load of Sin, and said, she *had but one Comfort, that her Landlord was the Cause of all.* The Husband, having a little Spice of Jealousy, catch'd at that Word, and thought he smelt a Rat; How, what (says he) our Landlord the Cause of all thy Sins? Aye, (says she, with bitter Cries and Reproaches) the cruel Man, he is! For why shou'd he keep such tempting Fruit in his Garden, and keep such strong Fences? When I can't come at it, I sin in coveting his Fruit and cursing himself; and when I can, I sin by stealing it. In short, I can never expect to do well 'till he grant me *free Entrance!* The Landlord did as well, for being Tenants at Will, he transplanted them to a remote Part of his Estate, and all was over.

As to the Power of making this extravagant Change in the Constitution, it is not *all* to say, the *Legislature has as much Power to repeal the Sacramental Test in the Reign of King George, as it had to make it in the Reigns of Charles II. or Queen Anne.* It is hard to say what the Legislature has not Power to do. It may have Power to alter or destroy the grand Charter of *England.* A like Power to set Beggars on Horse-back. A like Power of divesting Religion of all human Helps, and may give a good Reason for it too, God is it's strongest Defender. And, for ought I know, it may have a like Power to send Men to hang or drown themselves: And what signifies all that? Sure no Consequence can be drawn from what a Legislature can do, but what it reasonably ought to do for it's better Settlement, Regulation, and Security; neither of which can be reasonably expected from Men, either in Religion or Politicks,

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differing from us. A Difference in either, must for ever be the Cause of Jealousy and Competition, and like heterogeneous Particles in the Blood, be ever fretting and fermenting the whole Mass, till the Body either fall by a Convulsion, or be reduced to a weak and pining State.

If there be any thing in this desirable, if there be any thing in this worth making fundamental Changes for, let the Test-Act be repealed!—Let us, in the mean time, seek out some other Place, where we may with more Security enjoy our Religion and little Property. Let us thoroughly enquire, and get to the Bottom of this Argument, that we may be the better able to compute the Guilt, and Weight of Calamity, that must fall on these, or their Posterity, that in this give up, at least, one of the best *Stakes* they have.

Its to no Purpose to reply, you shall have *qualifying Oaths* instead of *qualifying Sacraments*. If the Wisdom of other Nations did not instruct us so well, we know of our selves too much of the Vanity and Danger of relying on the *Promises or Oaths* of any Man, to cherish and defend a contrary Religion; and both King *James*, and all that served under him, have given us enough of that. There's no Maxim more self-evident, than that none, but Men purely of Church-of-England-Principles, (I mean, for fear of Mistakes, neither *Jacobites* nor *High-flyers*) can be depended upon for the Security of the Church of England. It's what I would not expect from any other, nor wou'd I believe a Man that pretended it, on Engagements ever so solemn, on nothing but being actually of the same Religion. There's no Force, that I know, offer'd, or intended to oblige them either to quit their *own*, or to embrace *our Religion*, and therefore CONSCIENCE, (that right, or wrong must tip every Argument) is intirely out of the Question. There's no Force, (but that of the Lucre of the Salary) on any Man to take a Commission, or Place of Trust. And therefore, when a Man is at his Liberty to take ONE on the Terms the Disposer thinks proper, or to let it alone, (if Reason be not quite gone out of the World) surely a Refusal may as properly be called

called Treason, Murder, or any Thing in the World, as Persecution.

BESIDE, what we can not allow our Sovereign Lord the KING, we will hardly allow either *Subject*, or *Stranger*. We can not trust our Life, Property, and (what is dearer than both!) our Religion to any but Protestants of the Religion by Law establish'd. In short, the Thing is so contrary to the Judgment, and Conscience of every sound Member of the Church of *England*, that it is Madness, as well as Perverseness, in the People to be thus ever petitioning, tho' ever refused. It is resolved, therefore, to give a *Project* so dangerous and stupid, all Manner of Opposition, and to let the World know, that our excellent Government, as it is not to be terrified, is not to be soothed and importuned out of Things of such high Value: Is not (what some half-witted Politicians imagine) one of those *Misresses*, who must marry a troublesome Fellow, to get shut of him. It is some Comfort to an honest Man to have it to say, when Calamity comes, *this is my Unhappiness, and not my Fault*; while the Knave and the Fool can only whine, and say, *Lord, who thought it would have come to this?*

P. S. Instead of going to *England*, there was a shorter Journey, and infinitely a better Errand, to their Brethren in the *North of Ireland*, among whom so many monstrous Heresies have sprung up; and before they quite tire out the Patience of the World with Charity and brotherly Love, it is fit they should first fix it among themselves.

F I N I S.

